

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application in view of the present amendment is respectfully requested. Claims 1-3 and 5-13 are pending. Claims 1 and 6-8 are amended, claim 4 is canceled, and claims 12-13 are added. Claim 8 is amended according to the examiner's suggestion in order to overcome the objection. Claim 4 is canceled, and thus, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112 with respect to claim 4 should be withdrawn.

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Specht et al. Claim 1 is amended to recite toothed segment which is detachably attached to said piston and detaches from said piston to come out of engagement with said pinion after activation of said tensioning device.

Specht does not disclose or suggest a toothed segment which is detachably attached to the piston and detaches from the piston to come out of engagement with the pinion after activation of the tensioning device. By contrast, Specht discloses that the rack 5 is fastened to the step piston 2. In particular, a projection 9 of the rack engages an indentation in the step piston 2, and a holding piece 10 of the rack 5 is held by a securing projection 11 of the step piston. The rack 5 is fastened to the step piston 2 both before (Fig. 1) and after (Fig. 3) activation of the tensioning device. Further, as depicted in Fig. 3, the rack 5 does not detach from the piston 2 to come out of engagement with pinion 3 after activation of the tensioning device. The rack 5 remains engaged with the pinion 3. Therefore, claim 1 is allowable.

Claims 2, 3, 5, and 8-11, which depend from claim 1 and are allowable for substantially the same reasons as claim 1 and also for the specific limitations recited therein. Accordingly, allowance of claims 2, 3, 5, and 8-11 is respectfully requested.

Applicant appreciates the allowance of claims 6 and 7 if rewritten to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112 and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, these claims are amended to overcome the rejection and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and intervening claims. Therefore, claims 6 and 7 are allowable.

Newly added claim 12, which depends from claim 1, should be allowed for the same reasons as claim 1 and also for the additional feature that the at least one toothed segment detaches from the piston to come out of engagement with the pinion after activation of the tensioning device and in response to the piston being displaced a predetermined distance in the cylinder during unwinding of the belt. None of the prior art discloses or suggests this feature and including all of the limitations of claim 1. Therefore, claim 12 is allowable.

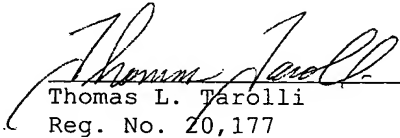
Newly added claim 13, which depends from claim 12, should be allowed for the same reasons as claim 12 and also for the additional feature that a barb is provided in the cylinder, wherein the barb engages the at least one toothed segment to allow the at least one toothed segment to detach from the piston upon the piston being displaced the predetermined distance in the cylinder during unwinding of the belt. None

of the prior art discloses or suggests this feature and including all of the limitations of claim 12. Therefore, claim 13 is allowable.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the above-identified application is in condition for allowance, and allowance of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in the fees for this amendment to our Deposit Account No. 20-0090.

Respectfully submitted,


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